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CORRESPONDENCE.

RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS.

MR. EDITOR—Paley, the great champion of the truth of Christianity, remarks, that “to her belong frankness, and the simplicity of conscious greatness—and whether she grapple with the pride of philosophy, or stand in fronted opposition to the prejudices of the multitude, she does it on her own strength, and spurns all the props and all the auxiliaries of superstition away from her.” If this sentence means any thing, it must signify that Christianity is a summary of her own doctrines, and of the *means* to teach them.

Whenever, therefore, we hear of theological seminaries, of bible, and tract, and missionary societies, unless the sacred books of the Christians directly authorize these, we are warranted to conclude, on the principles laid down by Paley, that they are the inventions, schemes, contrivances, and artifices of men—mere human devices—and that they who support them have some other object in view than teaching Christianity.

Two main articles of the bible theology are, that no man can say that Jesus is the Christ, but by the Holy Spirit—and that the *natural* man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned. The knowledge, then, of the truth and of the power of scripture interpretation, are the gifts only of the Spirit. When, therefore, we hear of a theological seminary undertaking to *manufacture* ministers of the gospel, as any mechanic manufactures articles of his own trade; using as means, creeds, catechisms, expositions, and commentaries, instead of the bible, we are certain that the Institution, so far from having the countenance or support of those writings which form the basis of Christianity, runs counter to them, because, to use the language of these writings, all such institutions “teach for doctrines the commandments of men.” In like manner, if there is nothing in the bible that enjoins or favors bible and tract, and missionary societies, we must regard them as “human devices.”

Now I have never been able to discover a single passage in the bible which in the most distant manner countenances these institutions. The fact is, they are a modern invention, entirely unknown to antiquity. In the early ages of Christianity, there were no legally incorporated societies of any sort—no societies having for their combined object the prosecution of particular enterprizes. Men first of all combined for mercantile purposes, and afterwards for other projects. As during the time in which the bible was written, there were no associations for particular purposes, or projects of enterprize—and particularly none for *religious* objects, other than the general associated body of Christians,

called the church, it is evident that there could not be a word in the bible predicated on associations of the nature of those in our times called theological, or bible, mission, and tract societies. Unknown as they were to what are called "gospel times," it was impossible that the gospels should say any thing regarding them. They are therefore wholly unauthorized by the scriptures—they are the mere creatures of speculation.

The main object of all these societies is to obtain money by begging for it. But does the bible authorize begging in this way? If it never recognized the associations themselves, it cannot authorize any part of their proceedings. The public begging practised by these societies, is, therefore, utterly destitute of all scriptural sanction. To *beg*, is to ask alms; but to solicit charity for pretended gospel purposes, unless warranted by the gospel, is to act in the teeth of the gospel. No charity, but that which relieves personal wants is enjoined in the New Testament. According to that book, the apostles and primitive Christians never dreamt of requesting either personal or public contributions, the avails of which were to create funds—to be converted into stock, with which to purchase houses and lands—to pay a host of salary head and subordinate officers—to pay presidents and vice presidents of societies—and a multitude of vagrant beggars, for their services in running through the country to beg for these societies. This is wholly a modern scheme—altogether ascribable to the genius of the present times, and not at all to the genius of the sacred books of the Christians, which recognise nothing of speculating schemes and projects. It is a device, the real object of which is to *get money*. The *ostensible* purpose is to further the interests of religion—but it is a mode which religion nowhere commands, countenances, or supports.

"But," say the friends of religion, "the gospel is to be propagated." Granted—But this surely is not to be done by means not authorized by the gospel, but by such means as it prescribes, and by those only. How wonderfully self righteousness blends and incorporates itself with the projects of the Christian world, as distinct from the injunctions of the New Testament! That book knows nothing of the self righteous show and parade, in the way of exacting contributions to further modern proselyting schemes—in which three quarters of the money is stopped by the way as gratuities to hirelings.

It appears from the annual report of what is called the "American Tract Society," (who have built an immense depository in Nassau-street, which cost \$25,000) that during the year ending the 9th of May, 1827, no less a sum than \$30,441 93 was paid for the printing of tracts; including the benevolent and disinterested services of officers and travelling agents; which two last items, that is, of benevolence and disinterestedness, swallow up \$3,192 02; or more than one tenth of the whole sum. If people ought to be more valued, as is generally the case, for the money they expend than for the good they do, then has the "American Tract Society" done an immense service to the community—for they have expended during one year (excepting what they have pocketed themselves) the enormous sum of \$30,441 93!

But let us examine the subject a little more closely, and we shall find that this Society, instead of having performed a meritorious deed, has actually squandered this money for a purpose highly injurious to society, inasmuch as its application is calculated to perpetuate ignorance, mental slavery, vice, and misery.

The question very naturally arises here, Of whom is the "American Tract Society" composed?

On looking at the list of members, we find that they consist of the richest and most influential persons in society—a long string of Honorables, Esquires, Reverends, and merchants. The poor, who have but little money, being under the necessity of presenting their mites to the New-York institution through the medium of agents or auxiliary societies, have the misfortune not to be members; and, of course, like other great institutions it is composed of great men.

But how are the funds collected? Why there are hundreds, perhaps thousands of persons, belonging to this society, worth from \$10,000 to two or three millions each. Besides, there is a great body of clergymen among the number, who receive from their hearers salaries of from one to ten thousand dollars annually; besides many other perquisites. The collection of funds is then at once accounted for. How easy for such a body of men to make up even a hundred thousand dollars, and scarcely know they have given any thing. Such, at least, would be the inference of any one unacquainted with the subject, on perusing such a long list of Honorables, Esquires, and Reverends, as that composing the members of the "American Tract Society." But here they will find themselves egregiously mistaken. The object of these men, is not to *pay* money, but to be known by what they call acts of benevolence, as lovers of God, and especially of religion; and to make themselves celebrated in the annals of the church, as being very liberal of—other people's money. Of this sum of \$30,000, about \$14,000 appears to have found its way into the treasury, in the form of donations, and sums paid as fees for memberships and dictatorships. Of these fees, however, more than \$4000 were made up by contributions from Churches, Auxiliary Tract Societies, and (mostly) by ladies, as presents to their ministers; of whom we recognise several, with salaries of from \$1500 to \$3500 per annum. Thus the sum paid into the treasury of the Tract Society, by all its great, and noble, and honorable, and Reverend members, is about \$10,000, or only one third of the whole. And this, I presume, is the last payment *they* will make, except it may be a three or five dollar note once in a year or two; for they have purchased their memberships and dictatorships, and paid for them; and they are not, generally, that class of people who are fond of paying money when there is no demand for it.

But how is the balance of the \$30,000 to be collected? In this the society displays its greatness. Fearing the people would be offended were they not allowed to give their money in aid of the great work, they generously extend the privilege of making it up to Auxiliary Societies, Mite Societies, Cent Societies, Gleaning Societies, and Praying Societies; to poor men with large families, and nothing but their hands to support them with; to widowed women, who have children

without shoes and stockings; to poor young women, who have nothing but a gold ring or some other favorite trinket that they can part with.

But there are many, whose *modesty* leads them to *decline* the proffered honor, and to withhold their money. To remove this *trifling* difficulty, a certain species of runners, called "travelling agents," who are dispatched by the great society, to travel through the country, have the *unspeakable condescension* to wait on the people at their respective places of abode, to remove all scruples respecting the *honor* intended them, and to receive the money at their own hands. If some from actual poverty, seem willing to be satisfied with the presentation of small sums, the agents never fail to assure them, that the Society is *great*, the object *great*, the requisite sum of money *great*, it being absolutely indefinite, and to consist of all they *can get*; that, therefore, they need be under no apprehension of depriving others of the privilege and the honor of giving; for if the money can be expended in no other manner, more Society Houses can be erected in New-York and elsewhere; more Tract Depositories established; more than twenty (the present number of) Presidents and Vice Presidents appointed; more Corresponding Secretaries, Treasurers, and stationary and travelling agents, all of whom combined, will very soon find uses for all the money that can be obtained.

To those who have the money, the Society *condescend* to extend the privilege of availing themselves of the honor of becoming "Donors," even by the money procured by cultivating potatoe fields, corn fields, or any other field, on land furnished by some rich church member, with the generous motive of aiding the operations of the mammoth society, at the serious expense and great risk of having some of his poor barren fields cleared of rubbish, enriched, and brought into a state of cultivation; while the families that perform the work are actually in want of the crops they raise to appease the cravings of hunger. Others have the privilege of going without shoes in summer, and of wearing the coarsest clothes—of dispensing with the use of sugar, tea, and any other of the little comforts and conveniences of life that have hitherto sweetened the toils and labors of the day. Females may sew, knit, plait straw, sell their rings, necklaces, chains, &c., all to enjoy the high privilege and honor of giving to the great society. True—the families of some of these poor men have sometimes to endure cold and hunger, and those who sew and knit, and give up their rings, have very little—often nothing—either to sew or knit for themselves. But it matters not;—there is a *great* object in view—*great* honor attends it, to say nothing of the good—*great* sums of money are necessary—and what the rich *will not* give, the poor *must*.

VERITAS.

[To be continued.]

THE HISTORY OF THE MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART.

[Continued from page 267.]

David being made acquainted, according to agreement, with the king's disposition towards him, retired to Abimalech, the high priest, at the city of Nob, (1 Sam. xxi. 5.) who treated him with shew-bread, and

armed him with the sword of Goliath ; which had been hung up and consecrated to God. (v. 9.) Josephus.

We may consider David's resuming this sword, after its dedication as a religious trophy, to be a manifestation of hostile intentions, or a declaration of war against Saul ; for which he now took the first opportunity to prepare. Thus accoutred, he fled out of Judea, to Achish, king of Gath, (v. 10.) intending, as we have good reason to believe, to enter into a treaty of alliance with him against the Hebrews ; but the popular cry was against him before he accomplished any thing ; or at least any thing that has reached our times. Here David appears to disadvantage ; for though his carrying with him the sword of Goliath, was artful enough, since it was a continual witness of that prowess, which had gained him such extraordinary reputation ; yet for him upon this occasion to throw himself into the power of the Philistines, from whose champion he had ravished that sword, was the highest imprudence ; and yet we perceive he had like to have suffered for it, had he not made use of a stratagem to procure his release, which he effected by acting the madman. (v. 13.) Mankind seem to have been very easily imposed on in those days !

David, thinking it now time to avow his design of disputing the crown with Saul openly, went to a cave, called Adullam ; which he appointed a place of rendezvous for his partizans. Here we are told he collected together a company of debtors, vagrants, and disaffected persons, to the number of four hundred ; and opened his rebellion by heading this party of banditti. (1 Sam. xxii. 2.) Hither also came to him his father and all his brethren ; and the first movement that he made, was to go to the king of Moab, to desire a retreat for his father and mother, until he knew the event of his enterprize. (v. 3.)

By the advice of the prophet Gad, David next marched into the land of Judah. (v. 5.) Gad, no doubt, hoped, that as the young adventurer was of that tribe, he would there meet with considerable reinforcements. When Saul first heard of this insurrection, he pathetically laments his misfortune to those about him, that they, and even his son Jonathan, should conspire against him. (v. 7, 8.) Then started up one Doeg, an Edomite, who informed Saul, that he had seen David harbored by the priests in Nob. (v. 9.) Upon this Saul summoned all those belonging to that city before him, with Abimelech their chief, who began to excuse himself as well as he could ; but Saul remembering, without doubt, the threatening of Samuel, concerning the affair of king Agag, (1 Sam. xv.) and considering these priests as the traitors whom he sought, he commanded them all to be slain, to the number of eighty-five persons. (ch. xxii. 16, 17, 18.) Moreover, agreeably to the barbarity of that people, the massacre included the whole city of Nob, man and beast, young and old, without exception. (v. 19.)

Though the king's rage in this instance exceeded not on y the bounds of humanity, but also of good policy, it nevertheless serves to shew how deeply the priests were concerned in the rebellion of David ; and shews also that Saul had not so great an opinion of their holiness, as we, at this distance of time, from their own annals, might be led to entertain. Had Saul been more tractable, he might have enjoyed the name of

king, have continued the dupe of the priests, have died in peace, and his children have succeeded quietly to the same inheritance after him. But

Ye gods! what havoc does ambition make
Among your works!——

During this time David rescued the city of Keilah from the Philistines, (1 Sam. xxiii. 3.) who were besieging it, hoping to make it a garrison for himself. But upon the approach of Saul, not thinking himself able to maintain it, being as yet but six hundred strong; and not choosing to confide in the inhabitants, he abandoned it, and retired to the wilderness. (1 Sam. xxiii. 13.) Hither Jonathan came privately to see him, and piously engages in the cause against his own father, by covenant; in which it was agreed, that if David succeeded, of which Jonathan is very confident, he was to be a partaker (v. 16, 17, 18.) of his good fortune; but as Jonathan was not to join him openly, he went home again.

Saul having received intelligence of David's retreats, pursued him from place to place; but was called off by news of an invasion of the land by the Philistines; (v. 27.) whether of David's procuring or not we are uncertain. After repelling the invaders, he however returned to the wilderness of En-gedi, in pursuit of David, with three thousand chosen men. Here we are told of an odd adventure which put the life of Saul strangely into the power of David. He turned in to repose himself alone, in a cave, wherein at that very time David and his myrmidons were secreted. (1 Sam. xxiv. 3.) This, one would imagine to have been a fine opportunity for him to have given a finishing stroke to his fortune, by killing Saul, and jumping into the throne at once. But David knew better what he was about, than to act so rashly. He could entertain no hopes that the Jews would receive for their king, a man who should imbrue his hands in the blood of the Lord's anointed. He therefore only privately cut off the skirt of Saul's robe, (v. 4.) and suffered him to depart in peace. When the king was gone out from the cave, David calls after him, and artfully makes a merit of his forbearance, protesting an innocency, to which his being in arms was, however, a flat contradiction. Saul freely and gratefully acknowledges himself indebted to him for his life, and seems so well convinced of David's strength and his own weakness, that he candidly confesses it; only tying him down by oath, (v. 21.) not to destroy his children after him; an obligation which, in due time, we shall see how well David remembered and fulfilled.

Saul must certainly have strayed very far from his men, to have let David catch him at so great a disadvantage; a conduct not usual with good generals. That such must have been the case, is however evident, while we credit the relation; since the meanness of Saul's reply to David's harangue, can be no otherwise accounted for. Saul does not appear to have wanted resolution on other occasions; but to acknowledge his assurance that David would obtain the sovereignty, and poorly to intreat a fugitive rebel in behalf of his family, is a conduct not even to be palliated, but upon the foregoing supposition. We must either condemn the general or the king; neither of which characters appear with extraordinary lustre upon this occasion. David, on the other hand,

dissembles admirably here; pretending to Saul a great reverence for the Lord's anointed; though conscious at the same time that he himself was also the Lord's anointed; and anointed purposely to supersede the other Lord's anointed; and moreover, was at this very time aiming to put his election in force! But as the people were not of his council, and he knew their great regard for religious sanctions, it was certainly prudent in him to set an example of piety, in an instance, of which he hoped, in time, to reap the benefit himself. About this time Samuel died. (1 Sam. xxv. 1.)

We next find our young adventurer acting the chief character in a tragi-comedy, which will farther display his title to the appellation of being the man after God's own heart.

There dwelt then at Maon, a blunt, rich old farmer, whose name was Nabal. David hearing of him, and that he was at that time sheep shearing, sent ten of his followers to levy a contribution upon him, (v. 5. 9.) making a merit of his forbearance in that he had not stolen his sheep, and murdered his shepherds. Nabal, who, to be sure, was not the most courteous man in the world, upon receiving this extraordinary message, gave them but a so so answer, attended with a flat denial. Who, says he, is David? and who is the son of Jesse? There be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not whence they be? (v. 10, 11.) Upon receiving this answer, David directly formed his resolution; and arming himself with a number of his followers, vowed to butcher him and all that belonged to him, before the next morning. (v. 13. 34.) And how was this pious intention diverted? Why, Abigail, the charming Abigail, Nabal's wife, resolved, unknown to her spouse, to try the force of beauty in mollifying our angry hero; whose disposition for gallantry and warm regard for the fair sex, was, probably, not unknown at that time. Accordingly, she prepares a present, and goes to David, saying very sententiously, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: (v. 24.) judging very humanely, that could she get him to transfer his revenge upon her, she might possibly contrive to pacify him, without proceeding to disagreeable extremities. Nor was she wrong in her judgment; for we are told—So David received of her hand that which she had brought him, and said unto her, go up in peace to thine house; see I have hearkened to thy voice, *and have accepted thy person.* (1 Sam. xxv. 35.) But whatever pleasure Abigail might have had, we do not find that Nabal was so well pleased with the convention his wife had made for him; for when he came to understand so much of the story as she chose to inform him of, he guessed the remainder, broke his heart, and died in ten days afterwards. (v. 37, 38.) David loses no time, but returns God thanks for the old fellow's death, and then marries the buxom widow, together with Ahinoam, a Jezreelite. For Saul had disposed of his daughter Michal to another.

We are now told another story strongly resembling that of the cave at En-gedi. Saul again pursued David with three thousand chosen men; again fell into his hands during his sleep, only that here David stole upon him in his own camp; he ran away with the king's spear and

bottle of water; and Saul went back again as wise as he came. (1 Sam. xxvi.)

I own that I subscribe to the opinion of Mons. Bayle, who looks upon this but as another detail of the adventure at En-gedi: and that, for much the same reasons. For upon a comparison of both, as laid down in the 23d, 24th and 26th chapters of 1 Samuel, we may remark:

I. That in each story, the Ziphites give Saul intelligence of the place where David harbored.

II. That in each story David comes upon Saul in much the same manner, withholds his people from killing him, and contents himself with taking away a testimonial of the king's having been in his power.

III. That in the second account, when David is pleading the injustice of Saul's persecuting him, as he terms it, he does not represent to him that this was the second time of his sparing him, when he had his life so entirely in his power! and that Saul's pursuing him this second time, was a flagrant instance of ingratitude after what had happened on the former occasion.

IV. That in the second relation, Saul, when he acknowledges David's forbearance and mercy to him in the present instance, makes no mention of any former obligation of this kind; although it was so recent.

V. That the historian, who evidently intends to blacken the character of Saul, and whiten that of David; does not make the least observation himself, in the second narrative, of reference to the first.

These reasons prove unanswerably that we are furnished with two relations of the same adventure. To account for this double record, and their variations, must be left to commentators, connectors, and harmonizers, who are used to compromise affairs of this nature.

David finding, that, with his present strength, he was not able to maintain any footing in Judea, puts himself once more under the protection of Achish, king of Gath. (1 Sam. xxvii. 1, 2, 3.) Achish, who does not appear to have been a very powerful prince, seems to consider David alone, and David at the head of six hundred desperadoes, as two very different persons; for he now assigns him a place named Ziklag, for a habitation, where he remained a year and four months. (v. 6, 7.)

As he had now a quiet residence, a person who entertains a great opinion of David's sanctity, would be apt to suppose he would confine himself to agriculture, composing psalms, and singing them to his harp; but David found employment more suitable to his genius. I should be very sorry to insinuate, that he did not sing psalms at leisure times; but his more important business was to lead his men out to plunder the adjacent country. We have the names of some nations, as they are called, but which must have been small distinct communities, like the present camps of wandering Asiatics, among whom he carried his depredations; these are the Geshurites, the Gezrites, and the Amalekites. (v. 8.) Of these people he made a total massacre, at those places where he made his inroads; saying, Lest they should tell of us, saying, so did David, and so will be his manner, all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines. (v. 9. 11.) After thus prudently endeavoring to secure his robberies from detection, he brings his booty

home, which consisted of all which those miserable beings possessed. He made presents of this, to his benefactor, king Achish, (Josephus) who, demanding where he had made his incursion, was answered, against the south of Judah, &c. (1 Sam. xxvii. 10.) intending by this falsity to insinuate to the king, his aversion to his own countrymen and attachment to him. And Achish believed David, saying, he hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever. (v. 12.) [To be continued.]

LIBERALITY OF SENTIMENT.

MR. EDITOR—Liberality of sentiment is the greatest ornament of man; it embellishes all his other good qualities, and makes them shine with double lustre; it softens all the harshness arising from difference of opinion; it lessens the frequency of private quarrels, and makes the Jew, the Christian, and the Deist, live at peace with each other. This amiable quality, though occasionally possessed by the first teachers of Christianity, has, in very few instances, ever belonged to any description of Christians since their times; for the sentiments of intolerance are early to be found in the writings of the fathers; and there is no established religion which does not condemn to eternal punishment all those who refuse to believe what the church enjoins. The liberality of true philosophy is unrestrained by the narrow creed of opinions merely speculative, and estimates every man's merit by his conduct, judging the great end of philosophy to consist in utility. But all mankind are not philosophers; for with most men, violence is the test of sincerity; and to be liberal is but another name for being indifferent. Such, however, have yet to learn, that sincerity in opinions is to be shewn only by actions, and that belief is a personal affair. What I should believe, no man has a right to dictate or inquire: what I do, concerns others only so far as it may affect their interest. To be liberal is only a virtue, because the perversity of the world has sanctioned the contrary; it is strictly that which every man has a right to expect, because no one has a right to say to another, "You ought to believe what I believe;" for belief should proceed from conviction, and conviction is not at every man's command.

Liberality, though not inconsistent with a belief of our own, forbears to interfere with the faith or the hopes of another; and all attempts to dictate to others are violations of that pure spirit of philosophy, whose only weapons of conversion are advice and argument; whereas the instruments of persecution are various, keen and cruel; for though (thanks to the temper of the times) those coarse correctors of heresy, the gibbet and the stake, are now out of fashion, yet the ingenuity of power has invented other methods of enforcing silence or belief, not quite so effectual, but more painful to the mind of the sufferer. The force of parental authority, the power of situation, the influence of riches, on the hopes and expectations, the feelings and passions of men, have all been exerted to effect that similarity of belief in things indifferent, which, were it obtained, could be of no advantage to any of the parties concerned.

The generality of the world are ignorant, illiberal, and little qualified to judge of speculative opinions. If a man thinks for himself, and ventures to speak his sentiments, they harshly and hastily condemn him, without being able to enter into his motives. But they are much kinder to each other; for so long as a man does not pretend to give a reason for what he does, they suffer him to enjoy his ignorance in quiet, and leave him to do as he pleases: but to him who professes any singularity of opinion, they cry out "Heretic! Infidel! Atheist!" and treat him with every species of insult and contempt. The strongest argument for religious liberality, and mutual toleration, is the great diversity of revealed religions throughout the world, and the confidence with which they are believed by their different adherents. They cannot all be true; and as they all exclude each other from the favor of heaven, it is much more reasonable to suppose that they are all false: to believe otherwise, is to make God the author of injustice and cruelty, by condemning men to eternal punishment for disbelief in what, from their education and prejudices, they never had the means of knowing. To suppose that he regards them all with an equal eye of benevolence, as so many attempts to gain his favor, is liberal and consistent, and in this light they are all for him; but to suppose that he has revealed one and punishes all the rest, is to make him partial, cruel, and unjust. Let each man then endeavor to please his Maker, by loving his fellow creatures, and whatever be his religion, whether Deism, Mahometanism, or Christianity, it will do no harm, and may do good; but whoever persecutes, hates, or oppresses those of different opinions from himself, his religion cannot be from Heaven, because it disturbs the peace of society. B.

NEW-YORK, SATURDAY, MAY 31, 1828.

Liberal Publications.—We have received since our last the first number of "*The March of Mind*," published semi-monthly at Cincinnati, Ohio, and "devoted principally to the two great subjects of *Theology* and *Politics*." We have also received the first number of "*Priestcraft Exposed*;" a monthly journal, established at Lockport; the object of which is decidedly and avowedly to counteract the anti-liberal arts and doings of priestcraft."

"*The March of Mind*" is published at \$2, and "*Priestcraft Exposed*" at \$1 per annum, payable at subscribing.

Convinced from long observation and experience that the press is the most powerful engine that can be employed against superstition, we hail with pleasure the appearance of the above journals; and from the indications now evident in almost every part of the Union, of a determination to crouch no longer under priestly thralldom, we entertain no doubt of their commanding a liberal patronage. That our readers may judge of the respective merits of these publications, we subjoin the following extracts; and it will give us pleasure to forward to the publishers of either paper, or of both, the names of those handed us, who may be desirous of aiding the editors in their magnanimous attempt to eman-

cipate the human race from mental bondage. In a spirited address to the public, the editors of "*Priestcraft Exposed*," remark:—

"It is apparent from orthodox prints, that an extensive and powerful combination is already founded in the United States, the ultimate object of which, can be no less than to controul liberty of conscience and freedom of discussion, and for *this service* get paid out of the national treasury, or in other words to establish a "national religion."

"Liberty of conscience and freedom of discussion, though guaranteed to Americans to the fullest extent, may yet feel the galling chains of ecclesiastical tyranny. And how can this be brought about? Suffer the "Rev. the Clergy" to pursue their covert plans without opposition for thirty years, and in whose hands will our liberties then be? Suffer them to manufacture and let loose upon us 40,000 educated Calvinistic priests, (their estimate for the year 1850,) and these supported by the generation that are growing up, "*with their sentiments*," and with what ease will they put their fingers on the wealth and liberty of this nation. The people of this country are not yet prepared to support BY LAW an *ecclesiastical establishment*, and notwithstanding the anxiety and "prayers" of the "regularly ordained," this *grand desideratum* which has so long danced before their imaginations, was likely to pass off like a vision of the night—and hence the necessity of a deep, extensive, and perhaps the best organized plan that ever was in the world to make their ends meet.

"Look at what is going on even in our own section of the country. See every exertion to raise money under the mask of some name that will *disguise the real object*,—even "*for the Lord's treasury!*" These plans *without exception*, are warmly advocated from the pulpit and the press—when, with little trouble, the dollars and cents so *disinterestedly* and *piously* gathered into the "*Lord's treasury*" can be traced to the *tables and backs* of the very beggars, or some of their clan, who pay the debt by begging again! Is the immense amount begged annually, in the name of the "poor perishing heathen" given to them? Nay, it is expended at the rate of from \$500, to \$3000 per annum, on *poor, despised, and persecuted missionaries!* Are not the "heathen" *laid under contribution* as soon as these missionaries get a foot hold among them? Look at the missionary journals for the amount *plundered* from the Sandwich Islanders—or a little nearer home, from our own Indians.

"The Christian religion has been made a mask under which the most barefaced robberies and cruelties, have, for ages been committed by an organized *corps*—falsely called gospel ministers—but truly priests! The crimes of these men, their murders and persecutions, have all been done in the *name of religion*, and to *support the gospel!*

"In countries where their works are consummated, what do we see but an innumerable body of drones, rioting on the hard earnings *forcibly* taken from the honest husbandman! Their creeds, their systems, and their craft, supported by the bayonets of tyrants! And is this primitive christianity? Is this the religion introduced by the holy Jesus, who was ushered into the world by a heavenly choir singing "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will to men!"

"Look at Great Britain, the most favored country of Europe! Behold upwards of \$40,000,000 annually wrenched from the hand of virtuous industry, to support vice, idleness and priestcraft! To support the very robbers who rob! Is this a specimen of the GOOD WILL TO MAN introduced by the Gospel? Do American priests disclaim all connexion with the wickedness of the English clergy? Why then are they aiming at the same "*christian perfection*?" Why be connected with the English Bible, Missionary, and Jew Converting Societies; these mammoth congregations for robbery? Why publish the doings of these robber bands, as sustainers of the christian religion, when their actions are so deadly opposed to all religion and justice!

"Our feeble efforts shall be devoted to the holy cause of exposing these virtual *deniers of christianity* and advancing religious inquiry—of promoting practical religion and sound morality. The limits of our work will not admit of an exposure of all the frauds practised in the various departments of priestcraft; indeed, it would hardly serve as an index; yet, we shall hold up for public detestation a few of these "pious frauds" as they pass along.

"Let it be remembered that we do not attack individual character—nor *practical religion*—it is the rotten system by which priestcraft is supported that we grapple with. Concise communications establishing or controverting this holy undertaking, shall have a place in our columns, "that all may hear the arguments on each side, and error, wherever it is, or however secreted, may be brought to shame, and *truth*, however despised or neglected, be finally triumphant." Let that haggard *superstition*, which has so long stalked fearlessly abroad in the land, be driven by the piercing eye of *reason* to her loathsome cave, and there, despoiled of her power to harm, be left to languish and expire alone."

It would appear that the *title* of the journal "*Priestcraft Exposed*," had given great offence to the pious fraternity, and that they had expressed their "holy ire" by revilings, scoffings and false assertions, the usual weapons resorted to by the priesthood when defeated by fair argument. But the editors, no way intimidated by the vituperations of these fanatics, boldly declare that they "despise a soft and deceitful name, under which to beguile the simple—the discerning are not to be entrapped by a false and suspicious "*cognomen*"—and where then is the benefit of hoisting false colors? Are not the clergy continually charging the friends of liberal discussion, with selecting names not indicative of the character of their works? Our greatest anxiety is, that we may do nothing dishonorable to the holy cause we have espoused—the enfranchisement of man from the fangs of Priestcraft and irreligion. To the furtherance of this desirable object, we pledge ourselves to apply a portion of the proceeds of "*Priestcraft Exposed*," in publishing and circulating such *Tracts*, as will have a tendency to open the eyes of the world, and counteract the anti-christian and anti-liberal acts and doings of *Priestcraft*."

The following, from the same paper, is an excellent hit at the projectors of the "*Orthodox* line of stages and steamboats:"—

"PIONEER STAGE RUNNERS."

"*Strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.*"—This passage is most forcibly brought to mind when we see individuals ransacking the country to get stock taken up for the purpose of establishing a line of Stages that shall not run on the first day of the week. These identical strainers, when at home sell sufficient *Whiskey, Rum, and Brandy*, every week to spread death and desolation among multitudes of their fellow créatures—"heirs of immortality."—They see clearly the "mote in their brother's eye, but the "beam" in their own is wholly overlooked. Will posterity believe, that in the nineteenth century of the Christian era, individuals who took so much pains to prevent travelling on one day in the week, felt so anxious that the Jewish Decalogue should not be violated, and that travellers should drink nothing but *Hot Coffee*, were the other six days of the week actually engaged in peddling a *Poison* whose baleful influence is felt and acknowledged from one end of the Union to the other! Yet such is the fact. Stand forth ye champions of priestcraft, and let the world behold your shame! Is this according to the precepts of Christianity—"Love thy neighbor as thyself"—to deal out a liquid that you know is good for nothing to the purchaser—yea, worse than poison to him! Truly was it said "ye strain at a gnat and swallow a camel."

From the March of Mind.

Mental Independence.—A question may arise in the minds of some, Why declare Mental Independence? I answer, because the mind of man intrinsically possesses a species of energy to effect what it has declared its intention to effect. "For a nation to be free, it is sufficient that she wills it," is a beautiful form of expression, made by the greatest philosopher and statesman of the age; yet his mind did not stop at merely *willing* the important and glorious event of our political independence; but he wrote, published, and *declared* it, "to a candid world." The spirit that was then abroad in our land, was constantly fostered and fed by a sensible and ocular exhibition of what pervaded so many bosoms. The declaration penned by Jefferson and adopted by the American Congress, operated upon the faltering minds of thousands, as powerfully as holding up the hands of Aaron, whilst Moses fought the battles of Israel against the Amalekites. So in the case of *mental independence*; its simple declaration by Robert Owen, at New Harmony, two years ago, has done more to unshackle the minds of hundreds from the thralldom of superstition, and the dogmas of opinion, than any event since the general introduction of letters. The *manner* too of that declaration, as well as the matter, (and manner had much merit in that of our political affairs) has done much to advance its utility. It breathed a spirit of enlightened liberality. It blamed nor praised no one. The errors of the mind were viewed, as they ought to be, accidental, injurious, but remediable—yet not without the proper application of proper means. One of the most important is, to take a bold and determined stand, to examine every thing coolly, deliberately, and by the test of reason; and until a high elevation can be obtained for our species by soaring above all bigotry and priestcraft, all parties, even the priests

themselves should be treated with respect and kindness. Let this course be pursued; let justice be done to the unfortunate; let all our efforts, whether mental or political, in furtherance of human happiness, breathe a spirit of charity, and all opposition shall retire before them, as the vapors of the morning flee at the approaching sun.

Christian Liberty.—We publish the following items from the *Brattleborough Messenger* for two reasons—first, because we are equally desirous with the bookseller alluded to, of obtaining a copy of “*Ethan Allen’s Bible*” for republication—and secondly, because the paragraphs themselves are a pretty fair specimen of the rancorous feelings entertained by bigots and fanatics against every publication tending to enlarge the human mind, and to unveil the frauds of the priesthood. They may go on as long as they please reducing to “dust and ashes,” all the liberal works they can obtain. But this will have no effect in preventing the diffusion of knowledge, or in changing the nature of truth. The demand for the theological writings of Paine, and similar productions is daily increasing; and whether the “*Christian world*” may want them or not, we presume that those who find it their interest to republish them, will not consult the editor of the *Brattleborough Messenger*, as to the propriety or impropriety of the proceeding.

From the *Brattleborough Messenger*.

Ethan Allen’s Theology.—A bookseller advertises for a copy of “*Ethan Allen’s Bible*.” It will be curious if he cannot find one in the State. It was an *abominable* deistical compilation, with some touches of *original infidelity* forming a big, heavy volume, published at Bennington, above forty years ago, and such works soon become *dust and ashes*.

We have seen with surprise a new edition advertised, in New-York, of “*Thomas Paine’s Theological Works*.”—“*Works*” indeed, and *theology* too! Paine and Ethan Allen were very good patriots, but very bad theologians. The *Christian world* wants no more of such “*Theology*.”

Liberal Tracts.—The friends of liberal principles in this city, are about to raise a fund for the purpose of printing and circulating such *Tracts* as are calculated to counteract the demoralizing effects of superstition, to enlarge the mind, and to promote human happiness. The plan has so far progressed, that we hope being able in our next to give its details. Meanwhile, we would earnestly recommend the formation, in all parts of the Union, of Auxiliary Societies for the accomplishment of the same object. It is intended to supply the *Tracts* at *cost*, so that they may be more generally circulated, and thus become more extensively useful.

New-York Yearly Meeting of Friends.—We understand that a division has taken place in this Society, on account of difference of opinion as to religious subjects. The party seceding, who call themselves the *orthodox*, amount to about 400 of both sexes; leaving from 1800 to 2000 in possession of the property belonging to the Society. We consider this a signal triumph of liberal principles.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Heathen Idolatry.---The heathen idolatry is a common topic of declamation and abuse on occasions of this nature. It stands, with modern absurdity and folly in the same circumstances with a woman who has been beautiful, but whose charms are faded, and who is ever the object of the most malignant satire to another who is distinguished with a native and original ugliness. The superstitions of the ancients, like their beautiful edifices, are defaced only by time and violence. The communities of antiquity, in their decline, seem to have been like some great minds in the decline of life; who are said to retain their former conclusions while they have totally forgotten the premises and calculations which had led them to them. The Heathen mythology is natural philosophy allegorized, and abused by poets and priests: Jupiter and Juno, and Minerva and Neptune, were personifications of real principles in nature; whereas the phantoms of modern superstition are representations of no true objects in heaven or earth. The former were in the state of all similies, metaphors and poetical ornaments, liable to be misunderstood and abused; but they were also useful, and furnished the most elegant entertainment and pleasure: the latter, being the produce only of perverted and gloomy imaginations, are never useful, never pleasing; but merely the instruments of imposture, to intimidate and injure mankind. Idolatry, therefore, was to be restrained, as all excesses of natural passions are to be restrained. For, by fixing the attention wholly on poetical persons, men were led away from nature, the only source of truth; they easily wandered into follies and vices; and their whole system fell a sacrifice to more extravagant and mysterious institutions. The emperor Julian seems to have had these ideas; and he lived at the very period of this remarkable revolution. He probably thought, that men were not at so great distance from the real principles of nature and truth; and would not require so much trouble to lead them back to those principles while they adhered to the heathen idolatry, as when the ambitious Christian priests had plunged them into the fathomless abyss of mysteries; awed them with heavenly and infernal phantoms; bound them down to unintelligible and useless dogmas; and reduced them to the "worst species of slavery. Succeeding events proved that he judged rightly. Men, by resigning their faculties to pretended heavenly commissioners, and becoming the tools of their ambition, exhibited a scene of ignorance, barbarism, cruelty, and villany, beyond any thing which had ever dishonored the annals of the world. This wretched state remained until some fragments of ancient learning were recovered; and some persons were tempted, by manly thoughts and fine writing, into reason, into heresies, and rebellions.

Holy Relics.---In the year 359, the emperor Constantius, out of a presumed and, perhaps, not inconsistent respect, caused the remains of St. Andrew and St. Luke to be removed from their ancient place of interment to the temple of the twelve apostles, at Constantinople; and from that example, the practice of searching for the bodies of saints and martyrs increased so rapidly, that in the year 386, we find almost the

whole of the devotees engaged in that pursuit. Relics, of course, speedily became of considerable value; and as they were all alleged to possess peculiar virtues, no expense or labor were spared to provide such treasures for every public religious foundation. Hence translations innumerable took place of the decayed members of persons reputed saints; and where the entire bodies could not be collected, the pious contented themselves with possessing such parts alone as 'Divine Providence chose to bless them with.' Without these sacred relics, no establishments could expect to thrive; and so provident had the persons been who labored in their collection that not a single religious house but could produce one or more of those invaluable remains.

Of the number of these relics that have been preserved, the following is only a partial list:—

A finger of St. Andrew; a finger of St. John the Baptist; the thumb of St. Thomas; a tooth of our Lord; a rib of our Lord, or, as it is styled, of the *Verbum caro factum*, the word made flesh; the hem of our Lord's garment, which cured the diseased woman; the seamless coat of our Lord; a tear which our Lord shed over Lazarus, which was preserved by an angel, who gave it in a phial to Mary Magdalene; two handkerchiefs, on which are impressions of our Saviour's face; the one sent by our Lord himself as a present to Agbarus, prince of Edessa; the other given at the time of his crucifixion to a holy woman, named Veronica; the rod of Moses with which he performed his miracles; a lock of hair of Mary Magdalene's; a hem of Joseph's garment; a feather of the Holy Ghost; a finger of the Holy Ghost; a feather of the angel Gabriel; a finger of a cherubim; the water-pot used at the marriage in Gallilee; the slippers of the antideluvian Enoch; the face of a seraphim, with only part of the nose; the *snout* of a seraphim, thought to have belonged to the preceding; the coal that broiled St. Lawrence; the square buckler, lined with 'red velvet, and the short sword of St. Michael; a phial of the 'sweat of St. Michael,' when he contended with Satan; some of the rays of the star which appeared to the Magi; with innumerable others, not quite consistent with decency to be here described.

The miracles wrought by these and such other precious remains, have been enlarged upon by writers, whose testimony, aided by the *protecting care* of the inquisition, no one durst openly dispute who was not of the 'holy brotherhood;' although it would appear, by the confessions of some of those respectable persons, that 'instances have occurred of their failure,' but that they always 'recovered their virtue, when,' as Galbert, a monk of Marchiennes informs us, 'they were flogged with rods,' &c.

Free Press Association.—The regular monthly meeting of the "Free Press Association," will be held in the Lecture room in the "Temple of Science," (formerly the Bethel Academy,) Elizabeth-street, between Houston and Bleeker streets, on Sunday, (to-morrow) June 1st, at 11 o'clock forenoon. In the afternoon, a Theological Lecture will be delivered at 4 o'clock.

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